

SWIMMING POOL WATER DISCHARGE GUIDELINES

As provided by Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection

Water from swimming pools and hot tubs often contain high levels of chlorine. Discharging chlorinated pool or spa water into streams, (irrigation canals or ponds, etc.) is harmful to fish and other aquatic life. The discharge of any sewage or industrial waste, including swimming pool water, to any waters of the commonwealth without a permit is a violation of the Clean Streams Law, the Act of June 22, 1937, P. L. 1987, as amended.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) does not require a permit for discharges from single residence pools, provided the guidelines outlined below are followed

These guidelines cannot be construed to waive or impair any rights of DEP to prosecute a property (pool) owner and/or pool company for any stream damage that occurs as a result of a discharge. Penalties would be assessed under the provisions of the Clean Streams Law.

Discharge of Water:

1. The following guidelines must be followed before discharging the water:
 - a. Prior to disposing or using the water for irrigation, shut off the chlorination systems if there is one, or stop adding chlorine.
 - b. Hold the water in the pool or hot tub for two weeks to reduce the chlorine level.
 - c. Discharge or use the water for irrigation in an area where the water will not flow into a stream or storm sewer.
 - d. Discharge or use the water for irrigating the property and ensure that it does not flow off the property.
 - e. Discharge or use the water for irrigation in a manner that will prevent nuisance conditions (such as creation of odors, and fly and mosquito breeding conditions). Nuisance conditions occur when water is held in the pool for a prolonged period.
2. The discharge should be at a rate which prevents erosion and optimized filtration. In no event should the pool water be discharged to waters of the commonwealth.

Standing water or accumulated rain and/or pool water from the previous season should be pumped from the top so as not to disturb settled solids. Solids on the pool bottom should not be discharged. After the water has been pumped, solids should be cleaned out manually. The discharge should not raise stream temperatures by more than 2 degrees Fahrenheit in a one-hour period or a total of 5 degrees Fahrenheit. The pH should be between six and nine standard units and total chlorine residual should be 0.0mg/l.

Cleaning wastewaters that contain muriatic acid or chlorine that is used in cleaning pool surfaces should be treated prior to discharge. Muriatic acid wastewater should be neutralized to a pH between six and nine standard units. Chlorine rinses should stand for a period of 10 days to allow chlorine degradation prior to discharge. Total chlorine residual of the wastewater discharge should be less than 0.5mg/l. Temperature should be monitored as described above (standing water). Chlorine rinse water pH should be between six and nine standard units.

Questions concerning pool guide lines should be directed to DEP's regional offices:

South-Central Regional Office
909 Elmertown Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17110-8200
Main Number: 717-705-4700
24-Hour Emergency: 877-333-1904